

New Leaders for New Schools™ ensures high academic achievement for every student by attracting and preparing outstanding leaders and supporting the performance of the urban public schools they lead at scale.

EVALUATING PRINCIPALS: RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

Principal and teacher quality account for nearly 60% of a school's total impact on student achievement, and principals alone for a full 25% (Marzano et al., 2005). The principal's impact is so significant because of the leadership actions principals take to create the school-wide conditions that support student learning—especially those actions that directly influence teacher effectiveness, including hiring, professional development, evaluation, and retention or dismissal. Therefore systems to evaluate principals should focus primarily on their success in increasing student achievement and teacher effectiveness outcomes, and they should also assess principals' demonstration of key leadership actions. Local school systems should then use these evaluations to drive not only key accountability decisions, but also to support professional learning and growth. By changing principal evaluation systems in this way, we can promote a powerful vision of principal effectiveness and improve outcomes for students.

Four Ideas for Improving Principal Evaluation Systems

- Make student outcomes and teacher effectiveness outcomes 70% of a principal's evaluation, and base the remaining 30% on the principal leadership actions shown to drive better results.
- Base the evaluation of principal managers and other central office staff primarily on student outcomes and principal effectiveness, and give principal managers the tools and skills they need to effectively balance principal accountability with professional support and development.
- Make the expectations of principal performance universally high and differentiated in ways that drive continuous improvement.
- Ensure that the evaluation system is informed by principals and other experts and is adapted over time to reflect new understandings of the practices that contribute to increased student achievement.

Recommendations for Policymakers

Federal government:

- Reduce conflicting layers of accountability and ensure alignment of federal school-level and principal-level evaluation and accountability.
- Align school accountability provisions in federal law to a new vision of principal effectiveness that includes a focus on increasing teacher effectiveness and improving student-level outcomes.
- Require states, as a condition of receiving ESEA Title II funds, to adopt and implement principal evaluation systems that define principal effectiveness based on student achievement and teacher effectiveness outcomes (70%) and the leadership practices to accomplish those outcomes (30%).

States:

- Revise existing leadership standards for principals to embrace student achievement and teacher effectiveness outcomes and to reflect the most current research on effective principal leadership.
- Establish a model principal evaluation system that defines principal effectiveness based on student achievement and teacher effectiveness outcomes (70%) and the principal leadership actions to accomplish those outcomes (30%).
- Reduce conflicting layers of accountability and ensure alignment of state accountability for individual schools and principals.
- Support ongoing improvement of principal evaluation systems through learning and innovation.

Local school systems:

- Adopt or create both leadership standards for principals and a principal evaluation system that define principal effectiveness based on student achievement and teacher effectiveness outcomes (70%) and the principal leadership actions to accomplish those outcomes (30%).
- Align the evaluation of principal managers and central office staff to the new principal evaluation system. Include accountability for student outcomes, the effectiveness of any direct reports, and key work practices such as providing professional development and support.
- Reduce conflicting layers of accountability and ensure alignment of local accountability for individual schools and principals.
- Invest in the professional development of principals and ensure that all such investments are tied to needs surfaced through principal evaluations.